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## SOCIETY IN PARIS.

BY MADAME ADAM.

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AFTER Count Paul Vasili, it is a great boldness on my part to speak of the society of Paris. I beg my readers to believe that it would not have entered my head to write on this subject had I not received the pressing invitation of the editor of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

It is impossible to depict the society of our capital, republican though it may be, without beginning with the Faubourg St. Germain. "*A tout seigneur, tout honneur.*"

Why can I not yield the floor for one moment to the sincerest, the truest, the wittiest of our great ladies, the Duchess de Maillé?

For more than a quarter of a century the noble Faubourg has met at her house every Sunday. Young and old find there pleasure and profit—the old from the calm of an atmosphere which has not varied in a single degree, where good form, good manners, the traditions of their youth, are strictly maintained; and the young in the most brilliant sallies of wit that can be evoked. The amiable dowager has the most admirable way in the world of weighing "the benefits of civilization and of democratic progress on social relations." She preaches with such fine humor, such exquisite *brusquerie*, that we are tempted to furnish her with the opportunity. None of her peers, whoever he be, finds favor with her if he is bitten by the ideas of "modernity"; it should be seen how she bestows a grandmotherly rating upon the young lordlings who show themselves too progressive.

The Duchess de Maillé is respected as well as loved, notwithstanding her biting, or, I should rather say, her nibbling, wit; because if she irritates vanity, she never wounds dignity. No one understands better than the Duchess the great art of receiving. Her salon is one of the most attractive, the most sought after, the gayest in all Paris, because gentleness hides itself there under

severest judgment, like eternal youth beneath the silvery hair of the mistress of the house.

Since I have spoken of one grandmother, I shall continue. The Duchess de Polignac has ten grandchildren. Just as the Duchess de Maillé finds pleasure in attacking new methods, so the Duchess de Polignac finds pleasure in defending men and things who are ill spoken of. Figuratively speaking, her drawing-room is wadded in such a way that the walls of her hôtel have never needed to have ears.

The Marquise de Lillers is one of those rare personages whose remarkable knowledge is accepted in the great world. It is true that she shrouds it with so many veils that its brilliancy is infinitely softened. The choice expressions and beautiful language which she employs are so little emphasized; learned as she is, she is so simple and so smiling, that even the Duchess de Maillé herself does not groan over her erudition.

If I place here the sparkling Countess de Montgomery, it is not to specify an age which she has not, and which she never will have; it is to mark to what degree her influence is beneficial over the young women who go to her to ask counsel. Never has a mind more sound, more upright, more indulgent, more lofty, held the delicate function of guiding youth. And how many go to her, and, having confessed themselves, return better, surer of the straight path!

In the great world, which is in itself a larger family, women, as they grow old, have a high mission—that of giving their experience for the service of the new generations, of unceasingly recalling them to the good traditions of a past always greater and more heroic than the present, and whose lessons teach a nobility which excludes the vulgarity of certain epochs. Among the financiers and the middle class the ancestor has often been the most skilful and fortunate, while in the nobility he has oftener been the proudest and the bravest.

Mothers and grandmothers teach their daughters distinction, as the law which should rule all their thoughts, all their acts, as well as their manners. Refined by all their surroundings, they receive the most delicate, the most chiselled, the most artistically-measured education that can be imagined. Thus the great lady who is a product of this education is more perfect than in any of the foreign aristocracies. All the lines of her character are soft-

ened ; the sentiment of her own beauty or value is weighed and sometimes effaced ; she is taught hour by hour forgetfulness of self, which is the basis of duty in the family, as well as of the courtesy of society. She learns to judge and to compare with good taste, and to express her thoughts with good breeding. She should know several foreign tongues ; she should have touched the thought of the whole world, and thence gathered the honey of her speeches. Knowing these languages, she can maintain with her numerous relations a correspondence that keeps her mind alert regarding all that which in other countries interests those of her caste.

Certainly, this admirable education has sometimes very little in common with learning. At certain epochs it has produced women who were pedantic, affected, exceedingly superficial, abstractresses of quintessences in regard to sentiment, putting words to torture to make them express more of the ideal than they can embrace or contain. At present, the Duchess de Maillé would say, exaggerated refinement is not to be dreaded, but rather the contrary. The classic dowager condemns English and American ways, and laments over the passion for sport which absorbs the youth of the day.

“But, Duchess,” say the young dukes, friends of the first “conscript” of France, the Duke of Orleans, “give back to us the daring adventures of the past, the battles, the opportunities for great acts of courage, and we will abandon the race-course ; revive a court, and we will sacrifice the clubs ; give us even a night of the 4th of August, and we will know how to prove that the French nobility has remained brave and has retained all its qualities of daring and devotion to its kings, of disinterestedness in regard to great liberal causes. Sport is only a gymnasium to maintain our manhood, otherwise without a field.”

“Yes,” replies the Duchess, “as the Mollier Circus maintains the suppleness of Hubert de la Rochefoucauld when he plays the clown there ; as the club preserves the traditions of good language ; as the meetings at Neuilly bring back the customs of courts.”

The young dukes are right, for among the well-born men the sportsmen are those who most recall their ancestors. Those who neglect active exercise, who have no other end than to seek after elegance, become exaggeratedly effeminate.

A young noble of this day ought to learn to ride from child-

hood, so that at his majority he may be a perfect horseman. The la Rochefoucaulds, the Bearns, the de l'Estrades, the Contades, the d'Armaillés are admirable riders. The greater part of those who pass some years in the army, and particularly at Saumur, are veritable centaurs. All the young men of the French nobility who go to St. Cyr only enter there to arrive at Saumur. They do not understand, they not admit, a military career except on horse-back. They wish to be dragoons, light-cavalrymen, cuirassiers ; very few consent to serve in the infantry.

When well-born young fellows have no taste for the army, they sometimes enter the navy, where they always occupy a privileged place, this arm of the service having the tradition of good education. Those who are neither soldiers nor sailors begin their social life by travels, but they rarely seek to complete their education in foreign countries, where they visit the aristocracy and the capital, shoot pigeons, frequent clubs, ride horses, or make excursions, always having for their destination a chateau or a country place where they hunt. Do not ask them to put themselves out to see a museum, a work of art, a library, a celebrated ruin : all that, in general, lacks interest for them.

Yet there are writers and artists in the French nobility. His Royal Highness, Monseigneur the Duke d'Aumale, is an admirable historian ; his nephew, the Count of Paris, has written more than one book of great research ; the Duke de Noailles, Academician, has written two volumes on "A Hundred Years of Democracy in America" ; Prince Eugene de Courtenay-Beaufremont, who descends in a direct line from Charlemagne, is a literary man, who devotes his talent as a writer to the glory of an illustrious family ; the Duchess of Fitz-James has written a useful and remarkable book on the method of combating the phylloxera by American grafts ; the Duke de Broglie, Academician, is famous for his pen ; the Viscountess de Turenne has signed with a pseudonym two very curious books ; the Marquis Antoine de Castellane and the Viscount Melchior de Vigné have, though still young, considerable literary luggage ; the Countess de Martel, granddaughter of Mirabeau, is no other than the very clever "Gyp" ; the Marquis Philippe de Massa is one of the wittiest writers for the theatre ; and the Duke de Bellune is at once author, actor, and manager of his own plays.

The Duke d'Audiffret Pasquier is an orator both classical and

individual; the Prince de Leon, son of the Duke de Rohan, in politics knows how to inspire a sensational article or to draw up a profession of faith better than any one; Count Albert de Mun allies sacred and profane eloquence in an incomparable manner.

Duke Edmond de Polignac is a distinguished composer; the Duke de Massa is also a composer of merit; the Duke de Marmier, a sculptor of talent, is, like the Countess de Greffulhe, a celebrated lover of music. The Duke de Clermont-Tonnerre is a remarkable violinist, and the Viscountess de Tredern, by her first marriage Marquise de Cosse-Brissac, is a singer of the first order. The Princess d'Arenberg, the dowager Duchess de Luynes, and Guy de La Rochefoucauld are painters of importance.

The men and women of the world in general know how to write a note with finished perfection. They narrate with that faculty of speaking well characteristic of those who have early occupied themselves with the art of conversation.

The greater number of the noble French ladies are always present at the receptions of the Academy, which has remained a popular institution in the Faubourg St. Germain because several of the great nobles belong to it, and the traditions of beautiful language have been maintained by it.

The French aristocracy has no aptitude for business. During the latter part of the empire there were several great names in boards of directors; there is still the Bank de la Bouillerie, very respected, very honest; some great nobles are directors in insurance companies; the Railroad of the West has a Noailles; that of Orleans has a St. Aignan; but since the failure of the Union Générale the entrance of the nobility into large affairs is not often attempted.

The Catholic bank of M. Bontoux had a great success; almost the whole of the French aristocracy had turned into it the larger part of its wealth. They may applaud themselves for it. Affairs like the Landerbanck, the Servian railroads, and the Alpine were good and honest. This bank wished to inaugurate a new system, that of seeking public credit only when an affair had given results, and not for its creation.

The jealousy of the Jewish bank broke the Catholic bank, and the "Krach" swept away the fortunes of the aristocracy and ruined many of its families. This failure drained the disposable money of the French nobility, to whom there still remain large landed estates at the moment when the agricultural crisis is at its

height. The Faubourg St. Germain will long suffer from this blow. During several years receptions and fêtes were rare on the other side of the water, as they say on the boulevard, and a certain number of *mésalliances* were judged necessary to reëstablish certain budgets. Marriages for money were made by the young nobles, the wives easily becoming patricians. There can never be any question of regilding an escutcheon through a son-in-law in the Faubourg St. Germain ; that would be an unprecedented scandal.

Outside of these necessities of fortune, marriages among the French aristocracy are marriages of convenience, of reason, of position ; they are prepared at an early date by the parents. Very few love-matches are made among well-born people ; they are even discountenanced. Why, it is said, should we upset what is established ? Love passes and position remains with the congenialities of family, of rank, and of fortune. Love which does not come before marriage may come after it, since the contrary is often seen.

There are among the French aristocracy many excellent couples. It is very bad taste to be in a state of disagreement. They see little of each other. It is not fashionable now for a husband to go during the day where his wife goes. The Duke walks about, strolls through the town, goes for a little while to the club—to the Jockey Club, which is the most elegant in the capital ; or to the Union, a club a little antiquated, but calm and tranquil ; or to the Agricultural Club, where they naturally speak of lands ; or to the Cercle des Bébés, Rue Royale, a gambling club. The Imperial Club, whose members are now received in the other clubs, has just united with the Union Artistique under the name of l'Epatant. The aristocracy created by the first empire mingles now with the old aristocracy. There are large fortunes among the Imperialists, and for marriages it is preferable to go to the nearest.

The married people meet each other again at dinner. Madame la Duchesse has made all her visits to her friends ; has driven to the Bois, and brings her quota of news. Dinner at home is an hour of repose. The chat with each other only has its charm. Good humor at table is inscribed in the current code of politeness. Society gives this habit, since it insists that we should sacrifice to it all our sorrows and annoyances. In truth, each of us could not mourn over all the vicissitudes of all the others.

Monsieur le Duc is in evening dress—dress coat and white cravat—whether he goes out after dinner or remains at home.

Madame la Duchesse, unless she has put on an elegant house dress, wears that in which she made her visits ; and if she goes out, she will dress herself for the theatre or the ball while her husband talks with his friends, or runs over a newspaper while he smokes.

In the morning, the man of the world goes riding in the Bois or exercises himself in fencing ; he has busied himself with his toilet, which is as important as that of his wife, and he has breakfasted quickly and very soberly. The woman of the world sometimes goes to the Bois on horseback with her husband ; she attends to her devotions ; has occupied herself with good works as well as with her toilet ; she also breakfasts very hastily, having a thousand things to do before dinner. In the evening, theatres, balls, dinner parties, occupy the aristocratic family even to fatigue, for the life of people of quality is far from being a sinecure.

The great houses where they receive are, first, that of the Duke and Duchess de Doudeauville, the greatest noble and the greatest lady of France. It is there that royalty hovers, and hovering becomes it better than alighting. The Count of Paris, Philip V., prefers study to society, his library to the ball-room. The "Queen" shines in conversation by her culture, and on horseback by her qualities as a sports-woman ; she will never be the queen of Parisian elegance, of aristocratic taste, and of the traditional luxury of the noble Faubourg and of the great capital. She will ever prefer the chase of the deer, the stag, or the boar to any fête, however brilliant it may be, and a thoroughbred to the most magnificent of jewels. Chantilly, the admirable residence, ornamented with the art and the refined taste of the Duke d'Aumale, interests her less through its rare collection than on account of the beautiful stables of the Condés, filled with valuable horses. The "royal"—I do not say royalist—*salon par excellence* is that of the Duke and Duchess de Doudeauville.

The evening parties at the hôtel in the Rue de Varennes are admirable. They are given generally in the spring from the 15th of April to the 15th of June, after the return from Cannes and Nice, and from the country-houses, where people remain later and later. Two thousand guests may be invited by the Duke de Doudeauville. The Duchess, born Princess Marie de Ligne, though of a haughty type of beauty, is extremely amiable. It may be said that she receives like a queen. Loving the world, she is loved by it, and she devotes herself to it almost entirely. The



Duke, still young in appearance, has a very distinguished air; his taste is wonderful in every thing that regards the organization of a festival. The splendors of his drawing-rooms and the magical way in which they are lighted are unique in Paris. The Duke is very kind, of vast generosity, and has great influence on the opinions of his set. He is the true head of the Monarchist party. He receives foreigners, the great political world, and knows how to bring together with perfect tact individuals who do not consent to meet each other except at his house. The Duchess, when she receives, is simply dressed, so as not to eclipse her guests. She who possesses jewels celebrated for their rarity never wears them at her receptions. The splendor of the flowers and suppers of the Duke de Doudeauville cannot be surpassed.

The *salon* of the Duke de Broglie, grandson of Madame de Staël, is a political gathering. The Duke has a perfect knowledge of foreign countries, expresses himself with elegance, and is intelligent, but he absorbs the greater part of the conversation. As a politician, he is more dangerous when he is in opposition than when he is in power, knowing better how to attack an adversary on his own ground than how to choose the ground himself. The daughters-in-law of the Duke de Broglie bring into his drawing-room an animation which without them it would lack.

The Count Othenin d'Haussonville, nephew of the Duke de Broglie, has also an Orleanist *salon*. The d'Harcourts, the Ségurs, the baronne Reilla, the Lamberts de Saint-Croix, like the de Broglies and the d'Haussonvilles, the Duke d'Audiffret-Pasquier, M. Bocher, and M. Buffet, constitute the staff of the Orleanist party. Since the fusion and since the death of the Prince Imperial, the three groups, Orleanist, Legitimist, and Imperialist, are commingled in one single monarchical party, and Monsieur and Madame Lambert de Saint-Croix have contributed much to the reconciliation of the Monarchist groups, the circle of their invitations being very select, yet very wide. Wit and grace reign as masters of their house.

An artistic and literary *salon* is that of the Princess Mathilde. All that Paris contains of wit and wisdom has been welcomed there, and is there retained. The choice language of the day is spoken there, the Princess having a mind open to all the movements of thought which talent initiates.

In the drawing-room of the dowager Marquise, on the con-

trary, they converse as they did in the eighteenth century. Good French taste, in the purity of its traditions, is defended foot by foot and saved.

At the Duchess d'Ayen's, at the Duchess de Noailles', the parties are grave and solemn. We become stiff, we become haughty, we become weary; but the supreme good style is to say : "I was yesterday at the Duchess d'Ayen's, at the Noailles'."

Madame de Pourtalès, with her amiability, with her charm which jealous time dare not blight; the Countess de la Ferrouays, with an unexpectedness, a tact of which she alone has the secret; the Marquise de Beauvoir, lady of honor to the Countess of Paris, with a grace, an originality, and a sparklingness of thought which make her the Frenchiest of French women; the dowager Duchess de Luynes, with her sadness as an unconsolated widow and her sweetness as a happy mother; the Countess of Grefulhe, with her poetry and idealism, which give her the appearance of a being superior to reality; the Duchess d'Uzes, with her impetuosity, the masterfulness with which she leads a hunt, celebrated also by her political alliance with General Boulanger; the Countess de Brigode, born de Grammont, with her slenderness, her incomparable distinction, and the melody of her voice; the Princess Alice de Monaco, born Heine (married first to the Duke of Richelieu), with the golden waves of her blonde hair, her angelic face, and her beauty; the Princess Anna Murat, Duchess de Mouchy, so charming and seductive, with a sincere and attractive worldliness; the Countess d'Harcourt, born de Mun, and her two sisters, the Duchess d'Ursel and the Countess de Franqueville, with their genius for conversation, which makes them the women the most sought after and the most surrounded of Parisian society; the Princess de Leon, with her sympathetic welcome, the fixity of her friendship, and her admirable jewels; the Viscountess of Turenne, born Fitz-James, with her delicate taste for literature; the Maréchale de MacMahon, with her personal influence which creates for her a truly sovereign court; the Viscountess de Durfort, so motherly, so gay, so much the noble lady; the Countess Aimery de la Rochefoucauld, so pretty, so envied, with a calm which is not ruffled even by the anxieties of her noble husband over precedence, good manners, the laws of the social code, of which the Count Aimery is the grand pontiff; the Duchess de Bellune, with the pleasure which she takes in receiv-

ing, so that you cannot forbear to partake of this pleasure with her; the Duchess de Valençay, who, on the contrary, interests herself cleverly in the occupations of her husband and his struggles for the defence of social usages; the young Duchess d'Albufera, with her carriage as the chief equestrian of France, her simplicity of high taste, her black hair braided on the nape of her neck; the Countess Jeanne de Montebello, so pretty and so handsome at the same time, so elegant and so wonderfully framed amid the artistic splendors of her hôtel in the Rue Barbet de Jouy—a frame which the Duchess de Montesquiou, in the riches of her collection, could alone dispute with her; the Marquise Antoine de Castellane, with her right-mindedness and her purity of taste; and the Princess de Sagan, with her rather noisy existence, but who knows how to break the antiquated moulds of receptions and invent new methods of amusing her guests, and whose fetes are a Parisian event,—all these great ladies, and many others whom lack of space prevents me from naming—intelligent, beautiful and distinguished, with that distinction which veils defects, imperfections, and age with so much grace—all these receive, come and go across this great Parisian society which so many other aristocracies envy.

The little Duke of Montesquiou, who dreams and knows how to play the magnificent; the Princes of Henin, with their traditional taste; the Duke de Lorges, of the house of Durfort, the man most favored by fortune and yet the saddest that lives; the Duke de Brissac, that perfect gentleman; the Duke de la Trémoille, so disdainful of his age, yet consenting to live in it with so much fulness, taking all that is delicate of what it offers; the young Duke de Luynes, and the young Duke d'Uzes, champions of the Duke of Orleans, the first "conscript" of France; and alternating with the old families, the Bonapartist nobility, the Murats, the d'Albuferas, the Rivolis, the Wagrams, the d'Abrantés, the Trévises, the Talleyrands, the Malakoffs, the Bassanos, the Magentas, the Montebellos, the Decazes, the Feltres, the des Cars, the d'Harcourts, the Fitz-Jameses, the Rohans, the Turennes, the Mortemarts, the Marmiers, the Grammonts, the Beauveaux, and the ducal families with foreign titles—the Sabrans, the Gadagnes, the Courtenays, the Caraman-Chimays—form the great staff of French society, always ready to belt on the sword, rusty or new, of their ancestors or their fathers

at the first bugle-call of France. If politically or democratically "the new social strata" indict the old, there is not one Frenchman who does not render homage to the patriotism of the nobility of our epoch. Coblentz would not be possible to-day.

One la Rochefoucauld is a cavalry officer ; another is captain in the army ; the two sons of the Duke of Fitz-James are soldiers, and Count Robert Fitz-James is in the navy ; the Duke de Maillé is a cavalry officer ; Count Amedée des Cars is a fanatical soldier ; the Marquis de Castellane has allowed his sons to enlist, as have many others.

The Marquis de Breteuil is the crack shot of France. All the young men of the nobility are great hunters ; many of them have passed through Saumur, and, as I have already said, they cultivate all species of sport ; besides the chase, they exercise themselves daily in fencing, lawn-tennis, racket and rally-paper, boating and riding, so that they are prepared for the fatigues of war.

To speak of things less grave, the women of rank who dress best in Paris are the Marquise de Beauvoir, the Countess de Pourtalès, Princess Anna Murat, the Duchess d'Albufera, the Princess de Leon, and the Princess Alice of Monaco—noble ladies for ages or noble ladies of yesterday. Some are perfect models, others copying them with success ; each has really or in appearance that distinction of carriage, that delicacy of wit which refines and perfects itself unceasingly in the daily contact of the same pursuits and the same characters. Good breeding and aristocratic education consist in this—that it becomes impossible for the most critical observer to find in a word, in a gesture, in an attitude, in a movement, in a salutation, in a look, in a smile, the least thing that is original or unconventional as an expression of good manners. Nothing either of the stiffness or the *abandon* of the Saxon races is permitted to a French woman of rank ; nothing of the Latin exuberance ; nothing of the Austrian arrogance, of the Prussian rigidity, of the wheedling graces of the Slavonians.

In the great world of Paris we must neither discourse nor argue, nor strive to dazzle those with whom we converse ; we may entertain them by lightly touching upon subjects, amusing others as we ask that they should amuse us ; approving of everything, unless one is the Duchess de Maillé and has employed a quarter of a century or more in making scoldings acceptable. The ease of mind acquired by this aristocratic education gives enough supple-

ness to conversation for it never to lose its harmony of shades, its perfect rhythm. The woman of rank is more subtle, more analytic, more observant than the man of her own caste. She lives more within herself. She is more profound. She is devoid at once of timidity and assurance. She has a sense of her distinctive value. She likes to question and to learn. She is curious, feeling at liberty to sift and reject all which it is not the best taste to assimilate. Devotion and worldliness mix in her mind in the direction of charity, and the exercise of this quality is as necessary in the world as in good works. There are, indeed, some young lords and ladies who are called *outranciers*, extravagantists, extremists; but these are the exceptions, and they return one day or another to the ordinary world, or they quit it altogether; they are, besides, the proof of the general fidelity to received ideas and are the Helots of good society.

At this moment it is the style to be melancholy, pessimistic; which irritates the dowagers, of whom the greater part force themselves, notwithstanding the weight of years, to preserve their cheerfulness. This will quickly pass. Did we not see at the end of the empire the "curled darlings" fight like heroes and bear with fortitude the misfortunes, the privations, the fatigues of that terrible year?

The French nobility to-day, while it keeps its superiority in elegance and is a teacher of good breeding, has become the compeer of the most ardent patriots. One cannot now be a man of the world and a sceptic; he is, therefore, a believer in the altar more than in the throne, and he is for France even to sacrifice. A lover of women, of amusements, frivolous, as light as you please, the French gentleman would not have a moment's hesitation in stripping himself of what is laughingly called *le pur gratin* (the outer coating), to make of himself a defender of his country.

European interests occupy and interest our nobility, who keep themselves informed of everything. They are Franco-Russian and very decidedly anti-German. General de Charette, who remains their captain, and who, since the fusion, has buried the white flag in the folds of the tri-colored banner, would be quickly up and in arms were France in danger. In celebrating the anniversary of 1889, France has celebrated the return to herself of all her children, for there are no longer any royalists more royalist than Frenchmen.

The only drawing-rooms where a stranger meets, at the same

time, the great world, the financiers, the artistic and political sets, are those of some great embassy. Each group, it is true, isolates itself; they watch each other, and though individuals meet, never does the mass mingle.

I do not speak of the theatre, the first nights of the opera, where, each in his own box, these celebrated representatives of the different Parisian sets are, as at the exhibitions, as at the races and the *concours*, face to face with each other; but here also there is no commingling.

Two groups, however, in the last twenty years have intermingled; these are the artistic and the political groups. The empire, notwithstanding its advances, having been unable to draw the artistic world to the Tuileries, and Gambetta having proclaimed his taste for an Athenian republic, arts and politics have begun to fraternize. The official world has even democratically relieved the comedians from the ostracism which still weighed upon them.

In the political world are found, then, all societies except the highest; in return, "the new strata" have taken it by storm. The provinces have furnished their superabundant contingent. Several generations of politicians will be necessary before great distinction rules in the greater part of the official residences.

The President of the Republic and Madame Carnot, who are not at all of the new strata, will hasten the day when the dainty social aspirants of the democracy will no longer have to groan like *Bridgson* over the *foörmes* of the more considerable representatives of their party.

Democracies have power, warmth of heart, and generosity, which exist among the masses in the superior races. The voice of the people, at certain moments, is the voice of God, but it is necessary that those who expect from it a certain perfection should wait with patience until the day when from this same democracy will rise, according to the Greek word, the best of itself—that is to say, an aristocracy.

The gravest reproach which can be thrown at the French nobility in general is that it draws from the smallness of its wealth its cruelty towards its poor members and its indulgence towards men of wealth. No doubt, in presence of the rich "finance," as they say—Rue de Varennes, Hôtel de Crillon, and Faubourg St. Honoré—the French nobility remain haughty in reality, nay, even in appearance, and practised eyes have no great

trouble in perceiving the shades of tone, manner, and carriage of a gentleman at the Rothschilds', or the Baron de Hirsch's, or the great Jew bankers' of Paris. The slightest detail is perceptible, and the dukes, when they consent to seat themselves at the table of the financiers, always find their cooking too spicy in flavor. You may wager one hundred to one, that they will not sip the fine wines of the Jewish bankers with the pleasure which they feel in drinking those of the Dreux-Brézés, of the Monteynards, of the Sinétys, whose aristocratic cellars have a wide renown.

The high "finance" in Paris entertain a great deal, and the French nobility, which frequents their entertainments, accepts their invitations with less parsimony than it returns them.

As to society features, the financial world has no distinctive traits, because its ambition is to have none, and to imitate with the utmost diligence the manner of living and receiving of the great world. It does what the other does, goes where it goes, dresses itself, furnishes its house and models itself in this likeness.

The high "finance" has become a neutral ground, where the nobility elbow the constantly-renewed society of rich foreigners, foreign nobles being received by the nobility, to whom they are generally related. Finally, the great French middle class exhibits there its daughters, and plays there the unending rôle of *M. Poirier*. The great manufacturers, the merchant princes, the mighty speculators, imitate the bankers, who themselves imitate the nobility.

The sober magnificence of the great nobles, which pervades the old mansions, has in time become acclimated there. In the noble Faubourg the bric-a-brac, though it has not the merit of discovery, has the very superior one of tradition; it is at home there, and it tells that at the period when it entered into the family such a thing happened, which is often written in the genealogy of some honorable or glorious deed. Purchased bric-a-brac is only in harmony with another *bibelot* as costly; it is no longer an object of art, but an object of price. Its surroundings often change its nature, and the purest style of the upholsterer will never make of the hôtel even of a Rothschild the hôtel of a Duke de Doudeauville.

The bankers and rich *bourgeois* indulge in great splendor and rich housekeeping, but profusion is visible; the fear of not spending enough shows itself everywhere. There is no assimilation.

The gilding on the walls, the plate on the table, are either too new, or of different shades, or too artificially dulled; the hangings are too new or too much freshened up by the upholsterer. In the galleries, the pictures have no normal succession of periods, and the fine family portraits are missing. At the Israelitish financiers' they talk loudly, and the soft pedal is never used for anything, because they have only what they wish to parade before their guests; what they can show them and make them envy. The silent heritage of a title would calm the appetite for distinction of wealthy parvenus, but this is the only thing which money cannot purchase.

A bridge of gold is thrown from one world to the other; they cross and recross, as over the bridge of Avignon. Marriages with the daughters of bankers and manufacturers bring money to the aristocracy, who need it, but the great nobles do not change caste, and the middle-class woman who becomes a noble lady gives sons to her husband, but not grandsons to her father. The financiers and the middle class succeed in their magnificent endeavor, only to become dupes in the matrimonial market. I see only the artistic world which has truly liberated itself from the great nobles. In former times the nobility protected arts and lived more in the intellectual life of France; they directed and absorbed it. At present the great world thinks it disdains the artists, while it is the artists who have separated themselves from it.

Writers, painters, sculptors, artists of all sorts, have become the favorite caste of the democracy, who honor them, enrich them, and make them live. To them the far-famed names conquered by high intellectual deeds; to them the splendid works which enable France to take peaceful revenges—harbingers of others.

Art and industry, the artist and the artisan, in democracies, have exchanges which double the power of each to the profit of the country.

Our Universal Exposition has been one of the most complete expressions of popular art applied to industries, and of industry lifting itself to the height of art. It is by genial good taste that democracy arrives at the conquest of its aristocracy; and traditional good taste does not suffer by this. The more æsthetic qualities a people possesses, the greater its power; and power is still the best means for conquering brute force.

JULIETTA ADAM.